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Submission of Briefs

As noted in *An Initial Statement,* the E.R.A.S. Task Force has set a target date of August 1975 for submitting a report to the Minister of Education. While we have attempted, in a variety of ways, to obtain feedback regarding the concept of resource allocation, we would welcome briefs from any individuals or groups wishing to express their views on the subject. Briefs should be submitted in writing to the task force at the address appearing on the masthead of this newsletter. Your opinions and comments will be taken into consideration in the preparation of our final report. We request that all briefs be submitted no later than the end of March 1975.

Task Force Publications

Two additional task force working papers are now available. Working Paper No. 5, *The Initial Stage in Implementing an E.R.A.S.,* is designed to offer some suggestions regarding the development and implementation of a resource allocation system. Working Paper No. 6, *E.R.A.S. in Practice: The Development and Implementation of a Systematic Decision-Making Process,* provides "case study" descriptions of a number of the pilot projects undertaken. Each of these documents can be obtained from the task force by written request. French translations of both of these papers will be available at a later date.

Manitouwadge Roman Catholic Separate School Board (pilot project)

In 1973-74, the Manitouwadge Roman Catholic Separate School Board decided to undertake a study of the general goals and objectives of the total school system in co-operation with the E.R.A.S. Task Force. The staff of Our Lady of Lourdes School, having now established overall goals for the school, is presently examining objectives for the Junior and Senior Kindergartens and the Primary, Junior, and Intermediate Divisions. Within each of these divisions, the staff is considering further clarification of the curriculum for language arts, mathematics, and science.

It is expected that this study will enable the staff to identify more clearly the basic areas of skills that are necessary for the child's development.

Some Tentative Conclusions Regarding E.R.A.S.: Its Development and Implementation

As a result of its experiences with the personnel of school systems involved in pilot projects, the task force has reached a number of tentative conclusions regarding the development and implementation of a resource allocation system. A number of these conclusions are briefly outlined below. A more detailed discussion of these points can be obtained by referring to Working Papers 5 and 6.

—Before a resource allocation system can be introduced, a reasonably clear definition is needed of the problem or issue to be solved, or of the objective(s) to be achieved. Such a definition will reduce the likelihood of resource allocation being perceived as "a solution in search of a problem".

—The problem, issue, or objective should be limited in scope; limitation of resource allocation to a specific school, program area, or activity will permit a better degree of understanding, communication, and commitment.

—The personnel should first acquire an understanding of the *entire* process. A detailed explanation of *individual,* isolated components of a resource allocation system is, therefore, to be avoided. Once staff members become familiar with the total system, they will better understand the value of specific tasks, such as the establishment of objectives, for making decisions with regard to programming and assessing results.

—It is inadvisable to dwell on any one aspect of the resource allocation process. Instead, the process should be worked through in its entirety, as rapidly as possible, so as to emphasize the integrated nature of its components. Since resource allocation is cyclical, the personnel will have an opportunity to improve and revise their past efforts.

—Unless people outside the school system have been involved *on a regular basis* in making educational decisions, it seems preferable not to involve them on a formal basis until the school staff becomes familiar with the concept of resource allocation.

—If a new educational concept that is introduced is to have any chance of success, leadership must be provided—not only initially, when the idea is first introduced, but also later on, by

**Comments
Regarding a
Systems Approach
to Decision Making**

encouraging the personnel to develop the idea and generate new ideas. In addition, leaders must have a basic understanding of the concept and should support and participate in all stages of its implementation.

A systems approach to educational decision making has two main advantages:

1. It encourages educators to thoroughly examine all of the factors on which a decision will be based;

2. It encourages them to organize their information according to a logical framework so as to achieve better decisions and a more effective decision-making process.

The quotations that follow reflect the need for and the potential utility of a system such as E.R.A.S.

> Arguing that planning imposes values on the future, the anti-planners overlook the fact that non-planning does so too—often with far worse consequences.
>
> A. Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 399.

> As educators we can deal with change in several ways. We can be spectators to change, or we may be participants in it. All too often we are spectators and are swept along with conditions that cause us to constantly *react* to situational crises, or even to delay until others make decisions for us.
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> An action-oriented approach to education requires that systematic and formal planning, design and implementation, evaluation and revisions take place. There is a constant effort to achieve relevancy and practicality for the learners, so that they may survive and ideally contribute in society when they leave our educational agencies. . . . a system approach strives to identify priority needs and requirements and attempts to meet the needs efficiently and effectively.
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> Not to plan at all, or not to plan on the basis of defining individual needs and characteristics is to chance the degradation of the person and his happiness, dignity, potential and ability. A system approach, however, is only a process for identifying and resolving educational problems, and it can be only as functional and valid as the people using it allow and require.
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> R. A. Kaufman, *Educational System Planning* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 3-4.

> After ten years of intensive assessment and questioning of the educational system in Ontario, it has become evident to classroom teachers that an effective strategy is required for planning curriculum.
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> Although the word curriculum is associated automatically with schools, the meaning of the word arouses controversy. For our purposes, we will define curriculum as "all of the planned experiences a student would have under the guidance of a teacher". Curriculum development then, must attempt to answer three questions:
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> 1. What will the student learn? (the selecting of objectives)
>
> 2. How will the student learn? (selecting appropriate teaching content and strategies)
>
> 3. Has the learning occurred? (choosing measurement and evaluation techniques)
>
> OSSTF, *Curriculum Design '73* (Toronto: Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 1973), pp. 3-5.